Attachment 2 to KS300-14-45
dated June 6, 2014

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM
DROUGHT RECOVERY
APPLICATION EVALUATION RANKING TOOL - STATE AND LOCAL QUESTIONS

State Issues–

1. Answer the following question if the application is for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP). The agency will assign significant ranking priority and conservation benefit by answering "Yes" to the following question. Answering "Yes" to question 1a will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the state priority category.

(a) Is the program application to support the development of a CAP? If the answer is "Yes," do not answer any other state level questions. If the answer is "No," proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section. (400 points)

2. Answer the following question related to resource concerns:

Unit of concern has resource concerns of Degraded Plant Condition–Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health and/or Degraded Plant Condition–Excessive Plant Pest Pressure. (115 points)

3. If applicable, answer ONE of the following questions related to the amount of rest to be provided by your planned grazing system. If none apply, leave the answers "NO":

(a) The planned grazing system will provide rest for greater than 91 percent of the days during the growing season. (205 points)

(b) The planned grazing system will provide rest no more than 90.9 percent and no less than 86 percent of the days during the growing season. (180 points)

(c) The planned grazing system will provide rest no more than 85.9 percent and no less than 82 percent of the days during the growing season. (155 points)

(d) The planned grazing system will provide rest no more than 81.9 percent and no less than 74 percent of the days during the growing season. (130 points)

(e) The planned grazing system will provide rest no more than 73.9 percent and no less than 49 percent of the days during the growing season. (105 points)

(f) The planned grazing system will provide rest no more than 48.9 percent and no less than 30 percent of the days during the growing season. (80 points)

4. If applicable, answer **ONE** of the following questions related to tamarisk (salt cedar), old world bluestem, or sericea lespedeza infestation. If none apply, leave the answers "NO":

(a) Agricultural land is infested with up to 10 percent of tamarisk (salt cedar), old world bluestem, or sericea lespedeza and the producer will implement a plan to control these species. (60 points)

(b) Agricultural land is infested with no more than 20 percent and no less than 10.1 percent of tamarisk (salt cedar), old world bluestem, or sericea lespedeza and the producer will implement a plan to control these species. (50 points)

(c) Agricultural land is infested with no more than 30 percent and no less than 20.1 percent of tamarisk (salt cedar), old world bluestem, or sericea lespedeza and the producer will implement a plan to control these species. (40 points)

5. Answer the following question related to brush infestation:

The grazing unit is infested with an undesirable brush species at the medium priority level as indicated in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG) for brush management and the producer will implement a plan to control the brush species. (10 points)

6. Answer the following question related to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applicant developing a contingency ranch or grazing plan meant to strategically identify specific actions to be taken by the land manager in the event of adverse climatic events, which emulates best stewardship conservation practices (CPs) and decisions:

Answer "YES" if all of the following actions will be taken for the purpose of protecting and enhancing the vegetative resource while protecting the long-term financial interests of the applicant.

- Applicants shall establish inventory and monitoring techniques that are completed at strategic times throughout the calendar year and growing season for the purpose of identifying real time or current growing conditions and vegetative production.
- Applicant will enroll in the Kansas Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS) Program for the purpose of collecting and reporting precipitation received daily on their ranch or farm.
- Applicant will either enroll or sign up with the National Drought Mitigation Center (Lincoln, Nebraska), or request assistance from the NRCS to develop a drought mitigation or contingency plan which uses data from forage inventories, periodic monitoring, and climatic data, to identify ranch specific actions to be taken in the event of a drought. (10 points)

Local Issues–

Answer the following questions related to the application:

1. Is the program application to support the development of a CAP? If answer is "Yes," do not answer any other local level questions. If the answer is "No," proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section. (250 points)

2. Application includes at least one CP with a lifespan of 10 years or greater, as documented in the eFOTG. (20 points)

3. CPs are scheduled to be completed within four years. (20 points)

4. Participant requested a conservation plan for this application prior to August 31, 2013. (40 points)

5. Application was deferred from a previous funding period in the Program Contracts System (ProTracts). (40 points)

6. If applicable, where livestock are wintered on grazing land where perennial streams are located, plan of operations will remove livestock access to the streams. (30 points)

7. Unit of concern contains 50 percent or greater expired or expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land and will be used for grazing or haying purposes. (30 points)

8. Plan of operations includes a prescribed burn after brush management. (30 points)

9. Plan of operations includes a prescribed burn. However, continuous annual burning will not occur. (5 points)

10. Participant has attended (in the past four years) a one-day grazing management workshop. Workshop curriculum must have included any of the following topics: plant physiology, grazing systems and design, range and pasture ecology, grazing and rangeland health, prescribed burning, forage and livestock balance, forage and resource inventory, soil and grazing resource interaction, and wildlife habitat creation/development/improvement through grazing management. (15 points)

11. Participant has attended (in the past four years) a multi-day grazing management school. Workshop curriculum must have included all of the following topics: plant physiology, grazing systems and design, range and pasture ecology, grazing and rangeland health, prescribed burning, forage and livestock balance, forage and resource inventory, soil and grazing resource interaction, and wildlife habitat creation/development/improvement through grazing management. (20 points)